



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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June 13, 2013

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
U.S. House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith,
Ranking Member
U.S. House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: The National Guard Association of the U.S. Opposes NDAA Amendment #247 (Rules #39)

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

As you are aware, there is an amendment sponsored by Reps. Van Hollen (D-Md.) Moran (D-Va.), Mulvaney (R-S.C.) and Woodall (R-Ga.) that would strip \$5 billion out of the Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funding and the underlining readiness and modernization plus-ups supported in the bill, which includes \$400 million for the National Guard and Reserve Component Equipment Account (NGREA). This would have a significant impact on National Guard equipment modernization, as this funding is critical for new equipment purchases and modernization not planned for or funded by the Active Components in the President's Budget. We urge you to oppose amendment #39.

Since September 11, 2001, the men and women of the National Guard have heroically answered our Nation's call, both at home and abroad, during a period of high operations tempo. Yet, year after year, the Department of Defense does not recommend adequate funding in the President's Budget request for the Guard's dual mission.

The National Guard faces mounting challenges regarding how to replace worn out equipment, legacy equipment that is becoming obsolete or irrelevant, equipment directed to be left in a theater of operations, and equipment that is aging through normal wear and tear. Inadequate funding levels, rising costs, lack of replacement parts for older equipment, and other factors have made it difficult for the National Guard to adequately maintain their aging equipment, not to mention modernizing and recapitalizing to support a viable legacy force.

The National Guard and Reserves Equipment Account (NGREA), established by Congress in 1981, is a Congressionally-directed program that provides essential funding for the National Guard and other reserve components to acquire new equipment and rebuild, refurbish and modernize existing systems.

In the last 8 years, Congress has dedicated over \$7 billion to this account to properly equip the National Guard as an operational reserve fully involved in operations overseas and domestically. While that funding has been critical to ensuring that the National Guard is properly equipped to respond both overseas and domestically, both the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard still experience equipment shortfalls. Equipment On Hand (EOH) has risen significantly from 40% just a few years ago

to approximately 90% currently. This dramatic turnaround is the direct result of congressional support and action.

However, these numbers factor in substitute items, items in theater, and aging or outdated equipment. The FY2014 National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report (NGRER) identified an almost \$29.7 billion shortfall for the ARNG for fully modernized equipment, approximately 26.6 percent of the total requirement. The report also found an \$8.8 billion shortfall for the ANG for fully modernized equipment, which is 14.5 percent of the total requirement.

With reduced budgets, the need for NGREA funding is more critical than ever to replace or maintain aging equipment.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose amendment #39 to remove the \$5 billion in OCO funds, where the National Guard's NGREA funds are included.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gus Hargett", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gus Hargett
Major General, USA, (Ret)
NGAUS President